

Municipal Alliance Assessment Guidelines

As the first step in the Strategic Prevention Framework, the assessment process involves the collection of data to define the problems, resources and readiness of a community to address needs and gaps in service. The assessment process involves the following four steps:

1. Create and maintain partnerships that will assist you throughout the assessment process.
 - This includes bringing key community stakeholders to the table.
2. Assess the community's substance abuse needs and resources.
 - Build on the community's history of providing substance abuse prevention resources.
 - Collect *qualitative* data from community forums, focus groups, listening sessions, key informant interviews, and surveys.
 - Collect *quantitative* data from various community partners and state resources.
 - Data sources selected must be retrievable in an updated form in the following time range:
 - Problem statement- data must be retrievable again in 5 years.
 - Root cause- data must be retrievable again in 2-4 years.
 - Local conditions- data must be retrievable again in 6 months-2 years.
3. Analyze the problems and community readiness.
 - Discuss the data in the context of emerging risk and protective factors. This also includes reviewing personal and environmental causes contributing to the community problem.
 - Ensure that the data is triangulated for the greatest credibility. According to Purdue University, "Data triangulation is when a piece of data, a finding, or a generalization is able to be verified with several different research methods. This helps add to your credibility and makes your findings stronger." (Retrieved from <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/559/09/> on March 25, 2013). Having multiple qualitative and quantitative data sources to support your findings will ensure a more accurate picture of the community's needs.



- Prioritize the problems based on the level of need substantiated through strong data as well as the community's readiness to take on the problem. The following questions can assist you in the prioritization process:
 - Are other local or county groups working on this issue? If so, who are they and will they become a partner?
 - Are local data sources available to get information?
 - How can the Municipal Alliance get access to data?
 - If there are no existing data sources, is the Municipal Alliance willing to utilize resources to conduct firsthand data collection such as interviewing key people and conducting focus groups?
 - Can the Municipal Alliance get data that covers the grant cycle in a timely fashion?
 - Is the problem related to substance abuse?
- 4. Develop a logic model as a framework for community change.
 - As a requisite for funding, each Municipal Alliance is required to complete one logic model. Only one logic model per Municipal Alliance will be accepted by GCADA. This logic model will be used as the basis for developing the Municipal Alliance's interventions.
 - There are four priorities that the Municipal Alliances must choose from. These priorities were determined through the analysis of statewide data by the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services Prevention Planning Committee which supported the identification of the following four priorities:
 - Reduce Problem Drinking/Binge Drinking/Underage Drinking
 - Reduce the Use of Illegal Substances
 - Reduce Medication Misuse
 - Reduce the Use of New and Emerging Drugs of Abuse
 - The priorities mentioned above are not to be confused with the development of a problem statement. The problem statement must correlate to the priority by providing a more clear statement of how the priority is manifesting in the community. The logic model framework provided by GCADA allows for the identification of one problem statement, up to two root causes, and up to six local conditions.



Logic Model Development

Identifying a problem statement

Through the data analysis process, the Municipal Alliance has identified problem areas in its community. Now the time has come to determine which problem the community is going to address by utilizing the following criteria:

- Only identify one problem that the Municipal Alliance will address.
- Do not place blame.
- Do not identify specific solutions in the problem statement.
- Define the problem by the behaviors and conditions that affect it.
- Ensure the problem is specific enough to be measureable.
- Ensure that the community concerns discussed through the analysis are reflected.

Identifying the root cause

- Understanding the cause of the symptoms is the next step in completing the logic model by asking, "But why?". This is where the Municipal Alliance will brainstorm why the problem is occurring.
- The logic model will allow for up to two root causes to be identified from the following risk factors:
 - Availability/Access
 - Community Norms
 - Low Enforcement
 - Low Perception of Risk
 - Parental Attitudes Favorable to Use
 - Peer Influence
 - Price
 - Promotion
 - Social Norms

Identifying the local conditions

- By asking the question “But why here?”, the Municipal Alliance will identify and address how the root cause is manifesting in the community. Local conditions are very specific and are tangible areas that one can capture in a photograph.
- The logic model will allow for up to six local conditions to be identified.
- Once the local conditions are identified, they must be correlated back to the root causes that they address. Each local condition can only target one root cause. However, each root cause may have multiple unique local conditions (up to six). Under each root cause is a box titled, “LC” where the numbers of the identified local conditions will be placed. Please see the example provided for details.

Cultural Competence

A Municipal Alliance has much to gain by committing to increase its cultural competence. An Alliance’s ability to communicate effectively within a diverse cultural environment brings new perspectives, ideas and strategies to the table and can deepen trust and cooperation among community members. An authentic community assessment validates indigenous knowledge and includes feedback and involvement of those who are most affected by the problem. Culturally competent Alliances are more likely to be effective Alliances. (CADCA’s Coalition Institute- Assessment Primer: Analyzing the Community, Identifying Problems, and Setting Goals, 2010)

Sustainability

Sustainability goes well beyond finding funding sources to support a community’s prevention efforts. Sustainability is a process, not a result, denoting action, not maintaining the status quo. Your Municipal Alliance is the backbone of your prevention efforts, and needs to be tended to. Building a strong coalition infrastructure to support prevention initiative is crucial. Sustaining the interest of coalition members over time means working on current problems and continuing to collect and assess current data and trends in the community. Working toward sustainability as you progress through each phase of the Strategic Prevention Framework takes a lot of intentional effort but is well worth the effort, and can make all the difference in the success of your efforts. (CADCA’s Coalition Institute- Assessment Primer: Analyzing the Community, Identifying Problems, and Setting Goals, 2010)

